
CHECKLIST & TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICANT: City of Pocomoke

NAME OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY: Pocomoke City

Please review the checklist of attachments and furnish all of the attachments that are applicable. Contents of the notebook should be tabbed and organized as follows:

- ☐ **TAB #1 Applicant Information**
- ☐ **TAB #2 Sustainable Community Baseline Information - In addition to hard copies of the project location map, a detailed listing of parcels (i.e. Parcel ID Numbers) that form the project boundary should be included. Maps should also be submitted in electronic GIS form (shape file). If you have additional comments or questions, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, DHCD, wolters@mdhousing.org.**
- ☐ **TAB #3 Local Capacity to Implement Plans & Projects: Attach Sustainable Communities Workgroup roster noted in Section III**
- ☐ **TAB #4 Sustainable Community Plan**
- ☐ **TAB #5 Progress Measures**
- ☐ **TAB #6 Local Support Resolution**
- ☐ **TAB #7 Signed Sustainable Community Application Disclosure Authorization and Certification**

**All documents on this checklist are mandatory.
Failure to provide the requested document will automatically deny your application.**

I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICANT INFORMATION**Name of Sustainable Community:** Pocomoke City

Legal Name of Applicant: City of Pocomoke

Federal Identification Number: 52-6000803

Street Address: 101 Clarke Avenue

City: Pocomoke**County:** Worcester**State:** MD**Zip Code:** 21851-

Phone No: (410) 957-1333**Fax:** (410) 957-0939**Web Address:** www.cityofpocomoke.com

Sustainable Community Contact For Application Status:**Name:** Russell Blake**Title:** City Manager

Address: 101 Clarke Ave.**City:** Pocomoke**State:** MD**Zip Code:** 21851

Phone No: 410-957-1333 x**Fax:** 410-957-0939**E-mail:** russ@cityofpocomoke.com

Person to be contacted for Award notification:**Name:** Bruce Morrison**Title:** Mayor

Address: 101 Clarke Ave**City:** Pocomoke City**State:** MD**Zip Code:** 21851

Phone No: 410-957-1333 x**Fax:****E-mail:** mayormorrison@cityofpocomoke.com

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

Through this section, applicants will demonstrate that trends and conditions in homeownership, property values, employment, commercial and residential vacancy, community facilities and infrastructure, natural resources, the local business and residential districts show a need for new or continued revitalization reinvestment. Demographic data and trends provided by Applicants should support the choice of the proposed Sustainable Community Area boundary and help form a basis for needs and opportunities to be addressed through the initiatives and projects described in the Sustainable Community Action Plan (Section IV).

POINTS IN THIS SECTION WILL BE AWARDED BASED ON THE SC AREA'S NEED FOR REINVESTMENT AS EVIDENCED BY THOROUGH DESCRIPTIONS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS OR TRENDS (and will not be based upon current or planned revitalization activities which will be covered in Section IV).

A. Proposed Sustainable Community Area (s):

County: Worcester

Name of Sustainable Community: Pocomoke City

Include boundary descriptions and a map of the Sustainable Community. In addition to hard copies of the of the project location map, a detailed listing of parcels (i.e. Parcel ID Numbers) that form the project boundary should be included. If possible, maps should also be submitted in electronic GIS form (shape file). If you have additional comments or questions, please contact Brad Wolters, Senior GIS Specialist, DHCD, Wolters@MdHousing.org

See attached map and enclosed disk.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

Approximate number of acres within the SC Area: 501.00

Existing federal, state or local designations (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Legacy Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Designated Neighborhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Main Street | <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Historic District | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Register Historic District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A & E District | <input type="checkbox"/> State Enterprise Zone Special Taxing District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRAC | <input type="checkbox"/> State Designated TOD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s): _____ | |

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

Prior Revitalization Investments & Smart Growth:

(a) List and describe any significant State and local smart growth or revitalization related program investments (for instance, Community Legacy or SC Rehab Tax Credit) that have been invested in the Area since the launching of Maryland's Smart Growth initiative and programs in 1997 (including Housing investment). What impact have these investments made in the community? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Pocomoke City has been designated a Community Legacy Area since 2002, and has received a total of \$730,625 from the program. The Delmarva Discovery Center was awarded \$73,000 for improvements to their building; the Marva Theater has received many awards from CL with a total amount of \$290,500; the Sturgis One Room School has received \$10,125 for repairs/heating/air conditioner for their building.

The City has been awarded millions of dollars from the Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. These funds have been used for street repairs, housing rehabilitation, fire department needs, sewer/septic projects, and the demolition of several dilapidated buildings.

A portion of Pocomoke City was designated as a State Enterprise Zone in 1991. The Enterprise Zone comprises 194 acres. We are currently seeking to have the area re-designated.

The following positive impacts have been seen as a result of these investments: additional jobs; improvement in the appearance of the downtown; attraction of an increased number of visitors; additional opportunities for heritage tourism; positive impact on the crime rate; improved water and sewer service to our residents; attraction of additional businesses, and improvement in the housing stock.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(b) Describe any existing barriers to Smart Growth that may affect your jurisdiction or the proposed SC Area. For instance, does your area have higher development fees than outer "cornfields"?

(Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The first and most obvious barrier to Smart Growth is the property taxes levied by municipalities. This inherently provides a strong disadvantage when competing with areas outside of city limits. The taxes collected by the City are over and above what is collected on behalf of Worcester County. Prospective developers therefore will want significant incentives in order to overcome this barrier. It has been our challenge to demonstrate to these developers that other advantages outweigh the barrier of increased taxes.

One of the biggest problems in attracting new industry is the lack of a well-trained workforce. Prospective employers are therefore reluctant to locate here for that reason, although there are a number of state training programs which focus on the industrial sector. This has been recognized as one of the main barriers to investment. We are therefore at a competitive disadvantage with other areas of the state.

Although Worcester County has an excellent, school system, many graduates leave the area for college or job opportunities elsewhere. Worcester County's economy is based upon tourism and agriculture, both involving seasonal jobs and leading to one of the highest unemployment rate in the state. We need to continue expand and develop the City's industrial areas to create new job opportunities, and to work with Wor-Wic Community College to train workers for the high tech jobs of the future.

Along with the disadvantages of having a small staff, we do not have the resources to provide appropriate marketing which would draw additional development, as well as help to foster a sense of community pride in town residents. Any funding which is used for marketing projects must be raised through grants.

The appearance of the downtown is also a direct contributor to Smart Growth. Businesses do not wish to locate in older commercial areas unless they are attractive, and there are significant financial incentives. In order to obtain the funding for such incentives, we must seek grants.

Other barriers to investment include challenges with the crime rate in certain parts of the city and the appearance of housing in some older neighborhoods, the seasonal nature of employment in the area, reliance upon agriculture and forestry, high vacancy rates in the downtown, slow rate of private investment, need for marketing funds to attract visitors, and lack of a Maryland Main Street designation.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

B. Community Conditions: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the proposed Area's existing built environment. For example, what is the condition of housing? Are there underutilized historic buildings and cultural places? What is the condition and availability of community parks and recreational assets? Are there transportation assets? What is the current condition of community infrastructure such as roads and lighting? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The proposed SC Area can be described as a historic area. The area is a mix of commercial and residential uses that include historic homes, townhouses, offices, a florist, churches, a hardware store, a bridal shop, photography shop, a dance studio, restaurant, tax preparers, a dog grooming business, a funeral home, a theater and 3 museums.

The proposed SC Area has a community park with playground equipment, two pavilions with picnic tables and a grill. We have placed a couple of Adirondack chairs on the City river dock that are getting a great deal of use. The park also has a tennis court, a tot lot and a skateboard facility that is under-utilized.

The neighborhoods located within the SCA offer a wide variety of residential uses: townhouse, single family and apartments. The homes date from the late 1890's to recent construction.

The condition of housing in most parts of the city is quite good. The city has actively been involved in a CDBG -- funded housing rehabilitation program since 1976. Funds received through this program have assisted us in addressing the worst cases of housing deterioration. However, due to lack of owner maintenance and the low income nature of the residents in certain areas, we must continually provide housing rehabilitation assistance. Probably the worst area in terms of housing conditions is the McMichael Ave. area, which is immediately adjacent to our Industrial Park.

Nearly all of the homes in the city which are of historic value have been well-maintained and present an attractive appearance. We now have four significant cultural attractions in the Sustainable Communities area. These are the Sturgis One-Room School, Mar-Va Theatre Performing Arts Center, the Delmarva Discovery Center and the Costen House Museum. All of these attractions are concentrated within a three block district adjacent to the Pocomoke River; however, some of them are underutilized due to a lack of marketing resources and volunteer resources.

The Mar-Va Theater was built in its current location in 1927 and the Costen House was built in 1878 as the home of our first mayor. The Delmarva Discovery Center building was a car dealership for many years and was built in the early twentieth century. The Sturgis One-Room School building was moved to its current downtown location from nearby and rebuilt on land donated to the project by the city. These attractions will draw more residents and tourists if they are able to establish more adequate hours of operation, with more volunteers. More resources are needed for the recruitment and retention of volunteers for our downtown attractions and events. With more hours of operation, we will be able to market more tourism packages.

We have several parks in the downtown area that lack sufficient passive recreation equipment. The City would like to add a community garden in the downtown area that will contribute to our revitalization efforts. There are plans to involve youth, as well as seniors. There is also intent to donate garden produce to a local shelter, and possibly include a healing garden.

The roots of our large Bradford pears trees planted along Market Street are raising the sidewalks, causing large cracks and creating significant safety issues. Funding is needed in order to remove the trees, (which were planted 25 years ago), and replace them with more appropriate trees.

Our transportation assets are adequate in that we have well-maintained streets. Community infrastructure is generally in very good condition.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the Area's land use/zoning make-up (residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use). Is the current land use or zoning conducive to revitalization investment? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The existing land uses are a mix of residential and commercial. Pocomoke City's Code Chapter 230- Zoning Code provides a mix of residential uses- R-1 ad R-2 allows for single-family residential developments with churches and parish houses, school and colleges for academic instruction, public parks, playgrounds, community centers, golf courses and buildings or properties of a cultural or conservation nature. R-3 Multi-family District allows for single family residential developments with churches and parish houses, schools and colleges for academic instruction, public parks, playgrounds, community centers, golf courses, and buildings or properties of a cultural or conservation nature; 2-family dwellings (duplex) existing, new construction or construction for which a building permit has been issued; multifamily dwellings existing, townhouses developments existing. The Planned Redevelopment District (PRD- Floating Zone is a floating zone that means that while regulations are adopted to govern any development within a PRD, no such district is pre-mapped on the City's Official Zoning Map. The B-1 Shopping District allows public parks, playgrounds and cultural or historical actives; boat dock slips, piers, wharves, anchorages or moorages for yachts and pleasure boats or for boats for hire to carry passengers or for excursions, sightseeing, pleasure trips and fishing trips, government buildings, motels and hotels.

The current zoning is conducive to revitalization investment. We see no necessity for amending our zoning code in this regard.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

3) Describe strengths and weaknesses in basic features of community quality-of-life. For instance, is crime an issue for this SC Area? What is the condition and quality of educational choices available to the community? Are artistic, cultural, or community resources, events or facilities within or accessible to residents in the proposed SC Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Pocomoke City has its own Police Department, which is the primary provider of police protection within the Sustainable Community Area. The County Police and State Police also assist with traffic stops on Rt. 13. Our department has worked hard over the years to combat periodic problems with drug dealing and assaults. Our Police Chief, Kelvin Sewell, has had a number of years' experience in police work in large metropolitan areas. Our cooperative work with the Worcester County Sheriff's Department and the Maryland State Police, is strong and has yielded many positive results. In order to address these crime problems, the City received designation as a Hot Spot community in 1999. The Hot Spot area includes the downtown business district and middle school. It is centered at the intersection of 6th St. and Market St. and extends outward in a radius of ½ mile in all directions. This area encompasses housing developments, shopping centers, residential areas, alcoholic beverage establishments, government offices and other facilities.

This program has been successful in significantly reducing crime in the city.

Located within the Sustainable Community Area are the "Sturgis One Room School, Delmarva Discovery Center, the Costen House, and the Marva Theater. The Delmarva Discovery Center opened approximately 2 years ago as a river-themed museum which includes exhibits of life both in and on the Pocomoke River. This includes terrariums and aquariums as well as exhibits related to oystering, shipbuilding, and the life of Native Americans in the area. The Discovery Center has initiated a number of educational and cultural programs. These special events provide the public with a unique opportunity for learning about the culture of the Pocomoke River. Events are geared toward all ages. These cultural resources are wonderful attractions for both residents and visitors; however they suffer from insufficient marketing resources and volunteer management. Some are open a limited number of hours due to the lack of volunteers, making tourism packaging – and marketing – difficult. If the City was able to better co-promote these attractions and assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteers, we are certain that these attractions would greatly enhance foot traffic to our downtown businesses.

Other than the Theater, there is a shortage of artistic resources in the SC area. The City would like to offer incentives to property owners to attract these resources for our residents, and to enhance tourism, as part of our downtown revitalization effort.

Pocomoke City has an elementary, middle and a high school, all of which have been awarded "Blue Ribbon School" status. In addition, there are many excellent postsecondary institutions within easy driving distance. This includes Salisbury University, located in Salisbury, Maryland, 20 miles from Pocomoke, as well as the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, located in Princess Anne, Maryland, which is only seven miles from Pocomoke. In addition, Wor-Wic Community College has locations in both Wicomico and Worcester counties and provides a excellent opportunity for a two-year degree.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

C. Natural Resources and Environmental Impact: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the community's "natural environment." in or near the Sustainable Community Area. What is the current condition of key natural resources - lands, air, water, watersheds, tree canopy, other? If the community is located in a coastal zone, what risks might the community be subject to associated with climate induced sea level rise? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Pocomoke River is the main natural feature in the city, with 1.8 miles of shoreline being located within our municipal boundaries. The Pocomoke flows for a total of 55 miles from the great Cypress Swamp in Delaware to the Chesapeake Bay. The cypress swamp along the river course is the northernmost example of the riverine bald cypress and black gum that are common throughout the South.

The river receives input from two local drainage systems in the city that run from south to north through a series of ditches, culverts, pipes, and overflows. These drainage systems provide for storm water runoff and deposit nutrient and sediment into the Pocomoke River. A significant portion of the city adjacent to the river is within the floodplain, which varies from approximately 100 to 1750 feet. This area includes wetlands, a part of the Winter Quarters Golf Course, Cypress Park, some residential areas, a few industries, and undeveloped land. There are no identified habitat protection areas on this section of the river.

While the river is a main attraction in our downtown area, flooding from adjacent swamp lands in Cypress Park does sometimes pose a parking problem for downtown attractions and events, including our Farmers & Flea market.

Soil conditions are not limiting factors for development in Pocomoke City except for certain tidal marsh areas and lands along streams and drainage ways. Pocomoke City was granted an exemption to the Critical Area regulation. However, in the city, the Critical Area regulations are still applicable for lands annexed after 1997 and during the development review process performed by the county for storm water management and erosion and sediment control.

The city has a more than adequate tree canopy. The downtown area contains a significant number of trees. Since nearly all of the residential areas date back several decades, most of the yards have a significant amount of trees and other plantings.

The city is in a coastal flood zone area. We see no significant risks associated with climate-induced sea level rise, as we have geared our construction to take these risks into account

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of any current efforts to reduce the community's "carbon footprint" or impact on the environment. Is recycling (commercial or residential) available to minimize waste? Are there current efforts to encourage the purchase and availability of fresh local food and other local products and services to the community? Describe any current energy or water conservation efforts that may be underway. If the community has not implemented one of the above initiatives, has the community identified a need or interest to pursue these or other efforts to reduce environmental impact, for instance through the new Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Pocomoke City has two locations in town for recycling. One is located at the old Rose's Plaza and another is located at our local bowling alley. The recycle bins collect plastic, paper, and card board. The City picks up yard waste from homeowners on the second Wednesday of each month.

Pocomoke City has a Farmer's Market during the Spring, Summer and Fall at no charge for farmers to bring their produce to sale.

Pocomoke City has a Farmer's & Flea Market year-round, downtown along the river. The City would like to be able to better promote the market and attract more farmers to sell their produce. The City would also like to develop a community giving garden.

We recently received a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration to upgrade the heating/air conditioning system with energy efficient equipment at City Hall.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(3) Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction's current stormwater management practices and how these may affect the proposed SC Area. Is redevelopment and retrofitting of infrastructure an issue or opportunity in this SC Area? Stormwater runoff is a significant source of pollution to Maryland's streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Buildings constructed before 1985 have little or no stormwater controls, and development between 1985 and 2010 have some controls. Updated stormwater regulations passed by Maryland's General Assembly in 2010 require that development and redevelopment projects utilize stringent stormwater controls. Sustainable Community Areas may have opportunities for redevelopment practices that can reduce stormwater flows. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City of Pocomoke's stormwater management plan must include design of land contours that will not increase surface water run-off on neighboring properties. Ground cover must be established immediately after disturbance, and a plan for permanent plantings, including trees, should provide for adequate vegetative cover within the flood protection setback from the watercourse to prevent erosion.

The City has adopted the standards for Stormwater Management by the County.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

D. Economic Conditions & Access to Opportunity: Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) Describe the jurisdiction's current economic strengths and weaknesses. For example, are there distinct economic drivers in the area or region that will affect access to job opportunities and the progress of the SC Plan? What are the main barriers to the Area's economic competitiveness? What is the current level of broadband access available to serve residents, businesses and public facilities? What efforts are currently in place to increase worker skills and employment? Describe trends in employment rates and business formation.

(Answer Space 4,000 characters)

As of December of 2011, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that Worcester County's unemployment rate was 15.6%, substantially higher than the State rate of 6.5%. This rate is relatively high because of seasonal positions in Ocean City.

The major strength of the economy of Pocomoke and Worcester County is its location in a rural and scenically beautiful area. The many attractions around the water and the unique culture of the Delmarva Peninsula have proven to be an economic draw, resulting in significant numbers of visitors, some of whom come from Ocean City to see some of the other attractions of the area.

In addition, there are a number of historical buildings which provide a rich source of attraction to visitors interested in heritage tourism, which is one of the major drivers of the local economy. This has sparked a market for small businesses geared toward tourism, such as restaurants, gift shops, and antique shops. The other major sectors of the economy are forestry, agriculture, and shellfish harvesting, which are limited by their seasonal nature.

The weaknesses in the local economy are as follows: relatively low educational attainment, lack of a skilled workforce, low economic indicators such as a low median income and a high poverty rate, lack of infrastructure, and lack of facilities for higher end businesses such as those dealing with information technology. In addition, the relatively poor state of the economy dictates that the local governments cannot provide significant incentives from their own budgets.

There are a significant number of vacancies in our downtown area. Most are in poor condition. The City would like to be able to offer money and incentives to property owners to upgrade their interiors and exteriors in exchange for reduced rents. (Tenants might agree to long-term leases in exchange.)

Pocomoke City recently allowed broadband providers to place equipment on its water towers. With this, broadband is available to Pocomoke's residents and businesses.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(2) Describe the jurisdiction's housing market and access to affordable workforce housing. What are the trends in residential construction (rental and homeownership), homeownership rate, foreclosure rate and, property values. Describe how and whether your jurisdiction's prevailing housing costs - both homeownership and rental - are affordable to households below 120% AMI, 80% AMI and 50% AMI. What efforts are in place currently to house individuals, families and the disabled at or below the AMI levels described above? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Pocomoke City has worked with the Community Development Block Grant Program since 1976 to help low-and-moderate income families repair and maintain their properties. It is estimated that approximately two million dollars has been spent to rehabilitate over 200 properties. This represents the City's primary efforts in providing a stable housing environment for its low-to-moderate income residents. The work that we have done enables these families to remain in their homes. Otherwise, necessary but costly repairs would force many to move.

Below is a list of low-to-moderate income housing available:

Clarke Manor Sr. Housing	Pocomoke Villas
Windy Gardens	Victoria Apartments
Hartley Hall Sr. Housing	Meadow Grove
Newtown Apartments	Sunshine Village Apts. (two locations)

There is a 30% rate of housing foreclosure rate in Pocomoke City. Residential new construction has slowed down greatly over the past 4 years to almost nothing. Therefore, the ratio of owner-occupied homes to rental homes has remained steady during that time and indeed, since the 2000 Census. The 2010 Census shows that the housing vacancy rate is 14.1%, with 85.9% of homes occupied. Of the occupied homes, 53.5% are owner-occupied and 46.5% are renter-occupied. Pocomoke has seen declines of 10-15% in property values over the past 4 years.

The income levels in Pocomoke are relatively lower than in many other regions on the Eastern Shore and in the State of Maryland. Our housing is affordable to those with incomes below 120 percent, 80 percent, and 50 percent of the annual median incomes.

II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION

(3) Describe the SC Area's demographic trends (with respect to age, race, household size, household income, educational attainment, or other relevant factors). (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The city has historically maintained a stable population growth rate. The total population as of the 2010 Census was 4184. The City's racial composition as of the 2010 Census is as follows: white 49.5%, black or African American 46%, other race approximately 2%. The median age is 39.

Per the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 33% of residents 25 years of age and over have earned a high school diploma, with 19.7% having a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 19.8% have not attained high school graduation. The remaining 27.6% have some college course work completed or have an associates' degree.

There are a number of indicators of economic distress in the city. The following figures are taken from the 2009 American Community Survey. The city's median income of \$22,113 is substantially below the state's median income. The per capita income is \$16,557. The total population in 2010, 4184, represented a slightly increase from 2000. The 2009 median house value was \$117,523, substantially less than the state median house value at the time. New building has declined steadily over the past few years. In 2010, only 1 building permit was issued, while 3 were issued in 2009 and 22 were issued in 2008. The City-Data.com crime index was 436.1 in 2009 and rose sharply to 619.2 in 2010. The US average is 319.1, with the higher numbers reflecting a worse crime situation.

The Pocomoke City Enterprise Zone qualifies for re-designation due to the fact that the rate of poverty in the area is greater than 1.25 times the national rate of poverty. The national rate of poverty, as shown in the 2006 -- 2010 American Community Survey, was 11.3 %. The qualifying level, 1.25 times that percentage, is 14.13%.

Census Tract 9515 is a residential area adjacent to and including parts of the Enterprise Zone. American Community Survey information for 2006-2010 shows that there is a poverty rate of 27.1% in that Census Tract, or almost double the level needed in order to qualify as an Enterprise Zone.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS

A. Organizational Structure:

Describe the Applicant's organizational structure. Specifically, which organizations are members in the Sustainable Communities Workgroup and who are the respective staff? Who are the leaders, and how will the Workgroup advisor or staff manage implementation of the SC Area Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Sustainable Communities Workgroup includes the following members: Mayor Bruce Morrison, Councilman Don Malloy, City Manager Russell Blake, Downtown Coordinator Angela Manos, City Clerk Carol Justice, Housing Coordinator Harvey Davis, Richard Seidel, a local resident and Marc Scher, a local businessman.

City Manager Russell Blake has 30 years' experience managing federal and state grants such as Community Legacy, CDBG, DBED, Program Open Space, DNR grants and others.

Policy in the city is directed by the Mayor and Council. Mr. Blake is the chief administrative officer and manages the city on a day-to-day basis. He is charged with the responsibility of presenting policy matters to the Mayor and Council for their review. In this capacity, he provides briefing and background information.

Carol Justice is the City Clerk and assists Mr. Blake with preparation for Council meetings. She handles city ordinances and resolutions and keeps the minutes for the Council meetings. In addition, she issues various licenses required by the city. Mr. Davis manages the city's housing rehabilitation program. Ms. Manos works on downtown marketing and promotion, event coordination, and business recruitment and retention. She also supports the efforts of the Downtown Pocomoke Association.

The City previously applied for a Main Street designation and is considering doing it again.

The workgroup is led by Mayor Morrison with staff support from Mr. Blake, Ms. Justice, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Manos. The Sustainable Communities work plan will be implemented on a policy level by the Mayor and Council and carried out on a day-to-day basis by Mr. Blake and supporting staff.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS

B. Organizational Experience:

Describe the Applicant organization's past experience in administering revitalization plans and projects. Describe the roles of the members of the Sustainable Communities Workgroup, including their experience in implementing revitalization initiatives. What are the strengths and challenges of the capacity of these groups with respect to implementation of the SC Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City Manager, Russell Blake, has held his position since 1977 and is well regarded in the area. Mr. Blake has been active in the Maryland Municipal League as well as in the organization of a city managers association.

The City of Pocomoke has been involved in downtown revitalization since the early 1970's. We have pursued an aggressive policy of promoting economic development and downtown revitalization.

The City has used the Community Legacy Program to: acquire and demolish a nuisance bar, acquire the historical Mar-Va Theater Performing Arts Center (which is on the historical register); provide lighting, wiring, curtains, and other miscellaneous equipment for the Theater; offer a façade program for downtown business; demolish a former grocery store to construct a new volunteer fire department building; rehabilitate the Delmarva Discovery Center building; assist the Sturgis One Room School and Heritage House, and the historic Costen House; replace downtown street lights; and create a mini-park in the downtown area.

The City has extensive experience in administering Federal and State grant. Since 1997, Pocomoke has administered a business development revolving loan fund financed by USDA. In 1981, the City instituted a unique downtown business interest subsidy program utilizing funds from HUD. This program assisted ten businesses and was recognized by HUD as one of 100 outstanding public-private partnership programs nationwide.

The City has administered numerous CDBG grants which provided funds for housing rehabilitation and infrastructure.

For example, the City has received CDBG funding to undertake the following projects:

- rehabilitation of 12 owner occupied homes of low and moderate income persons
- rehabilitation of 16 homes occupied by low and moderate income renters
- street resurfacing
- armory renovations –This project benefited low and moderate-income persons who participate in the Salvation Army and other programs.

Projects undertaken to promote downtown redevelopment include the following:

- installation of decorative banners on downtown area poles
- repaving of the roadway entrance to Cypress park and electrical upgrade
- installation of a new community clock in front of the mini-park on Market St.
- paving of parking lot at Market and Second Sts.
- installation of new play equipment at Cypress Park
- resurfacing of tennis courts at Cypress Park
- installation of a new entrance/welcome sign for the downtown area at the corner of Market and Front Sts.
- initiation of a revolving loan fund granted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to stimulate business development and expansion, primarily in the downtown
- demolition of blighted Coffman-Fisher building on Market St.
- planning and execution of downtown events to increase foot traffic to both businesses and attractions

No concerns have been cited in past audit reports. Mr. Blake will handle the administration of this project.

The City's downtown coordinator managed the implementation of a federal grant in a six-state region for more than five years. She also has extensive experience in marketing, volunteer management, external relations, industry relations, strategic planning, and community activation.

The Downtown Pocomoke Association (DPA), lead by SC Workgroup member Marc Scher, is beginning to spearhead many revitalization efforts downtown. This group is volunteer-lead. The volunteers are primarily downtown business owners, who are struggling themselves. For this reason, it is imperative that the City supports its efforts, in the areas of strategic planning, marketing and volunteer management.

III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS & PROJECTS**C. Public Input:**

How did residents and other stakeholders in the community provide input to Action Plan described below in Section IV? *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

Comments were received from the public at various Mayor and Council meetings. The Downtown Pocomoke Association offered their comments and suggestions.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

A. Supporting existing communities & reducing environmental impacts.

(1) A community's approach to Smart Growth generally includes two inter-related areas of focus: encouraging reinvestment and growth in existing communities; and, discouraging growth that degrades natural resources, and farms and rural landscapes. Broadly describe your jurisdiction's Smart Growth approach and any significant accomplishments made over the last decade or so. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

As a municipality, the City of Pocomoke is well-positioned to promote Smart Growth. This has been our policy since this concept was enacted into law. Even prior to that time, the City followed the principles of Smart Growth.

A number of state funding programs require that the project take place within a Smart Growth area, or Priority Funding Area. We are therefore experienced with planning projects which will be in compliance with the Smart Growth concept.

The City of Pocomoke has followed the letter and spirit of Smart Growth legislation. We have worked cooperatively with the state in order to direct all development in our area to within town limits. We are very attuned to the benefits of Smart Growth and have incorporated this principle into our policies.

Significant accomplishments include the following: assistance to the development of cultural assets in the downtown, ENR upgrade at the wastewater treatment plant, drilling of a new well, participation in the Hot Spots/CSAFE initiative to fight crime, supervision of the construction of a new restaurant in the downtown, continuing and extensive housing rehabilitation program, administration of a revolving loan fund to assist downtown businesses, renovation of the armory, and paving of streets.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) Describe any major investments in community infrastructure -water, stormwater, sewer, sidewalk, lighting, etc. -- that must be undertaken in order to improve the readiness or competitiveness of the proposed SC Area for private investment and compliance (if applicable) with TMDL regulations. Addressing the stormwater during redevelopment can reduce the pollution entering our streams and contribution to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Investments in infrastructure, generally, can be an important catalyst for new private investment in the community. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City's Comprehensive Plan has identified the following needed projects:

- restoration of green infrastructure and improvement of access to pedestrian and bicycle paths
- highlighting the city's market potential and positioning the downtown for economic development
- create an extended planning area outside of the city borders and, in cooperation with the county, support low-density land-use in the extended planning area
- within the city borders, set priorities to encourage infill development in support of environmental stewardship
- adopt a green infrastructure approach for the preservation and cultivation of natural areas
- promote areas for entertainment, cultural enrichment, recreation, and Main Street commercial activity
- preserve the rural and scenic nature of the gateways into Pocomoke City, including the installation of road signs and civic billboards and markers
- creation of green infrastructure corridors and sidewalks which would include bikeways in green spaces connecting neighborhoods to each other
- sidewalks at all three local schools
- Shore Transit should be requested to provide more transit service to and from Pocomoke City
- monitor, maintain, and upgrade Pocomoke City infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, parks and storm water management, street lighting, golf course, fairgrounds, nature trail, and landscaping
- develop a system of loans to landlords renting to low income homeowners to facilitate rehabilitation of their homes
- follow the principles of the Maryland Smart Code to facilitate rehabilitation of structures whereby suitable downtown buildings may be rehabilitated through incentives and zoning and promotion of federal tax credits
- encourage and support development and revitalization of the downtown

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce the SC Area's impact on the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: conservation or management of stormwater through retrofitting of streets and by-ways (Green Streets, rain gardens, etc.); retrofitting of facilities and homes for energy conservation; implementation of "green" building codes and mixed-use zoning; recycling of waste; clean-ups of watersheds; and, encouragement of "Buy Local" approaches that benefit local suppliers and food producers. A comprehensive menu of such actions may be found through the nonprofit Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City's Comprehensive Plan recommendations are heavily weighted toward environmental considerations. The following are recommendations which have been made in this regard:

- restore the natural functioning of the green infrastructure
- require development to show connections to green infrastructure
- substantially increase the number of trees in the floodplain and preserve standing wooded areas which would include the planting of native species trees
- develop a plan to preserve and cultivate natural corridors within the city
- landscape buffers should be planted in redeveloping high density areas
- impervious surface areas should be reduced within the floodplain and within 100 feet of the Pocomoke River
- stream corridors and wetlands should be repaired to regain their natural functioning
- annexation agreements should be drafted with consideration for the enhancement and preservation of green infrastructure. Pocomoke City's green corridors should be extended into newly annexed areas whenever possible
- new development should avoid sensitive natural areas

Additionally, the City's downtown coordinator works with the Downtown Pocomoke Association to promote "buying local." Efforts are also underway to enhance our Farmers & Flea Market and to plan a community giving garden.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Mayor and Council of the City will be fundamentally involved in the approval of, and funding for, the initiatives anticipated. The Downtown Pocomoke Association, (inclusive of downtown businesses and our four non-profit attractions), and the City Manager will be advising the Mayor and Council in moving the City forward, through open and public meetings, and inviting public review and comments.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

B. Valuing communities and neighborhoods -- building upon assets and building in amenities:

(1) What are the key assets that exist in the community upon which the Plan's projects and initiatives will build? Assets may include physical assets such as parks and historic structures and also civic and economic assets such as employers, educational institutions, and cultural organizations and activities. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

We believe that we have several important assets that can be used to reverse the decline in our downtown Sustainable Community area. Our location on the banks of the Pocomoke River, designated a Wild and Scenic River by the state of Maryland, is one of our biggest assets. A neighboring 12,000 acre Rural Legacy Area in the Pocomoke Forest, fishing and boating on the river, and nearby Cypress Park all provide natural assets adjacent to the Sustainable Community area.

We also have a rich heritage which includes Native American settlements, the unique flora and fauna of the Pocomoke River and a compelling history centered around trade, shipbuilding, and steamboat traffic in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, our most important assets are the nonprofit attractions that have been developing over the past few years. These attractions include the Sturgis One-Room Schoolhouse, the Marva Theater, the Costen House and the Delmarva Discovery Center, which includes a restaurant which will open in May of 2012. The restaurant is being funded primarily by two grants, one a US Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise grant and the other a Community Development Block.

Other recent attractions include the Cypress Park nature trail through the adjacent cypress swamp and the privately owned Bay Queen vessel which is berthed adjacent to the Discovery Center building and is available for tours of the river. The four nonprofit attractions are operated by committed volunteer groups. The city is trying to help each of them develop to their full potential, with our goal being to create a critical mass of attractions to allow us to promote the downtown area as a tourist destination. We are somewhat limited in our ability, however, to adequately market and support these attractions. The City would like to be able to offer more marketing resources and resources in the area of volunteer recruitment and retention, in order to extend the hours of operation of these attractions. Ultimately, we want to create more visitors and foot traffic, which will in turn support existing businesses and encourage development and investment in new businesses in the downtown area.

Other important partners in this overall plan include the Downtown Pocomoke Association and the Chamber of Commerce, the state of Maryland, and Worcester County. All of these groups have demonstrated their commitment to the future of our Sustainable Community area by joining together to work on project activities. During the past year the Downtown Pocomoke Association has stepped to the forefront in leading our efforts to promote the downtown as a destination.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) What policies, initiatives or projects will reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts/Main Streets and cultural resources of the community? What actions will reinforce your community's authentic "sense of place" and historic character? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The core community of the downtown business district is the heart of Pocomoke City. It is clearly the historic and cultural center of our entire city and is situated prominently in our Sustainable Community area. All of downtown tourist attractions are concentrated within a three block district adjacent to the Pocomoke River.

The Mar-Va Theater was built in its current location in 1927 and the Costen House was built in 1878. The Delmarva Discovery Center building was built in the early twentieth century and was used as a car dealership for many years. The Sturgis One-Room African American School Museum and Heritage House was moved to its downtown location from nearby.

These historic and cultural resources, together with other downtown amenities, will provide a critical mass of attractions which we are confident will lead to the revitalization of our downtown business district. We believe that this core area should continue to receive additional attention from the city, the county and the state to ensure that our revitalization goals will be realized. Pocomoke City's history is closely tied to our location on the river which is adjacent to the downtown center.

We will undertake the following initiatives in order to enhance these resources and reinforce our community's authentic sense of place;

- emphasize cultural tourism and ecotourism
- promote attractions
- promote "buy local"
- assist owners of historic properties in taking advantage of various tax credits and other financial incentives
- consider working toward designation as a Maryland Main Street community

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities? A community can gain social and physical benefits from access to a healthy natural environment. The inclusion of complete streets, trails, green space, parks and trees contribute to the character and health of a community. Examples might include improvements to the tree canopy by planting street trees, improving local neighborhood streams, or reusing a vacant lot for a new community park or playground.*(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

Much emphasis is given to green projects and practices in the city's Comprehensive Plan. This philosophy is guiding our development on a day-to-day basis. Due to the fact that environmental sustainability is a worthy goal in and of itself as well as the fact that much of our economic development and tourism depends on preserving our natural environment, we plan to initiate several projects which will enhance environmental considerations. Our location on the Pocomoke River is our most important asset. It follows that all of our projects and policies will be aimed at taking advantage of this natural amenity. This includes making sure that environmental considerations are followed which will protect the river and our open space.

In 2008, the city completed a nature trail through the Cypress Swamp. This nature trail begins at the Delmarva Discovery Center and ends approximately three fourths of a mile away at a fishing pond. Our Sustainable Communities plan calls for an emphasis on maintaining the trail and using it to promote Pocomoke as a tourism destination. The fact that it is linked with the Delmarva Discovery Center will ensure that it is utilized to the maximum extent. Other attractions at the center include a new restaurant, lectures and educational events, and group trips on the Bay Queen during the warmer months. We have added seating to the city docks, along the river and nature trail, as well as additional lighting on the docks. There are also plans for a kayak ramp.

We also plan to emphasize the maintenance of Cypress Park and plan to make bikepath improvements and upgrades to the existing bandstand building. We plan to follow the recommendations of our Comprehensive Plan and substantially increase the number of trees in the floodplain area as well as encourage the planting of landscape buffers. In addition, it is our goal to repair stream corridors and wetlands so that their natural functioning is restored. The term "green edge" was used repeatedly throughout this document in order to emphasize the plan's recommendation that the city preserve natural areas along its boundaries.

We are in the midst of completing another mini-park in our downtown. The mini-park will include seating and bike racks with the goal of increasing the walk-ability and bike-ability for both residents and tourists. High school students will assisting with planting and weeding in the garden, thereby further encouraging youth involvement with our downtown revitalization efforts, and further enhancing community pride.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

The following groups will be involved in the projects discussed in this section: the City of Pocomoke, the Pocomoke Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Pocomoke Association, consisting of downtown businesses, property owners, and non-profit attractions, including the Delmarva Discovery Center, the Mar-Va Theater, the Costen House, and the Sturgis One-Room School Museum.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

C. Enhancing economic competitiveness

(1) What economic development policies, initiatives or projects will improve the economy through investments in small businesses and other key employment sectors? What economic development and business incentives will you build upon or implement as part of the SC Plan? Examples could include but are not limited to: green-taping for expedited project application review; permitting and inspection; job training; business tax credits; and, revolving loan funds. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

There is a significant need for reinvestment in our Sustainable Community area, particularly downtown. Pocomoke City has suffered for many years from a lack of entrepreneurs and investors in our core area of the downtown. This has resulted in the deterioration of some buildings to the point where they have later been demolished. It has also resulted in a significant number of vacant storefronts needing rehabilitation in the downtown area.

Our plan is to invest Community Legacy funds in our nonprofit groups and businesses downtown. One focus will be to rehabilitate and fill vacant storefronts. We have already provided assistance to the Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Company for construction of their new community center building and fire headquarters at 1500 Market St.. We believe that investing Community Legacy funds in the downtown area will lead to additional visitors to our community and a new sense of pride in the downtown. This in turn will lead to greater private investment in privately owned property in the downtown business district. New investment will then lead to new businesses which will create increased employment opportunities to our community. Replacement of the 25-year-old streetlights downtown has also improved the aesthetic appearance of the downtown and help to attract more shoppers and visitors.

Although it is not in the downtown area, our community center project has benefited all residents of the city by providing an important gathering place and increasing community pride. This project has also allowed the reuse of an abandoned former drugstore building by the fire department and the entire community.

The following are specific actions which will support economic development in the city:

- continue to administer our existing revolving loan fund; enhance awareness about availability of those funds; and increase flexibility in the use of those funds
- update our zoning code to include opportunities at the second and third floor levels of existing downtown buildings. This will allow building owners to maximize their return on investment while providing additional potential shoppers and visitors to the downtown area
- continue to coordinate and promote numerous festivals, art shows and other events in the downtown to increase foot traffic and to enhance the downtown's image
- work to attract new restaurants and retail shops to our downtown
- continue to support the Delmarva Discovery Center (DDC) and other attractions. (The DDC has recently begun sponsoring numerous lectures and educational seminars
- develop a marketing strategy for promoting downtown Pocomoke as "wedding central"
- develop strategies for marketing tourism packages for downtown attractions and businesses
- develop a website for promotion of downtown businesses, attractions and events
- work with the county and neighboring communities on the Eastern Shore to promote general tourism to the area, including downtown Pocomoke as a destination

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) What workforce development policies, initiatives or projects will increase access to jobs and economic opportunity for residents in the SC Area? Do you have a goal for job creation? Are green jobs an opportunity in the jurisdiction or SC Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Town would like to enhance the Industrial Park with an additional new flex building space. With the proximity to Wallops Island Flight Facility and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the City is situated to support the growing aerospace industry.

The City will be active in disseminating information regarding the state's workforce development assistance programs. We will target training programs as this has been an issue for prospective new employers in the county in the past. This is due in part to the low educational attainment of county residents. The State of Maryland has a full range of excellent training programs which have been relatively underutilized here. We will be proactive in ensuring that prospective new employers are fully aware of the plethora of assistance programs available for job training.

As of December of 2011, Worcester County had the highest unemployment rate in the state (15.6%). Any new businesses which locate in Pocomoke will have an immediate impact on job creation. This is another justification for creating a business friendly approach to permitting and inspections. Due to our small size, we have been able to be business friendly. However, our Sustainable Communities Plan institutionalizes this policy and emphasizes its importance.

We will certainly encourage any new businesses to hire local residents and minorities. This has nearly always been the case with any new enterprises locating in the area. These businesses seem to prefer hiring local residents in order to provide a more stable base among their employees.

We will also explore obtaining funding for a revolving loan fund, either on our own or in conjunction with the Worcester County Economic Development Department.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Describe whether the Sustainable Community will be impacted by the Base Re-alignment and Closure (BRAC) activities in Maryland. If impacted, how do the initiatives and projects in your Plan complement BRAC-related growth? (If not applicable, all ten points will be assessed based on answers to questions 1, 2, and 4) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

N/A

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The following groups will be involved in the projects discussed in this section: the City of Pocomoke, the Pocomoke Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Pocomoke Association, the Delmarva Discovery Center, the Mar-Va Theater Performing Arts Center, the Costen House, and the Sturgis One-Room School Museum.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

D. Promoting access to quality affordable housing.

(1) What housing policies, initiatives or projects will expand housing choices - rental and homeownership -- for people of a range of ages, incomes, and also for disabled individuals? How will these actions address the current housing conditions and needs noted in Section II? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

Pocomoke City has been committed to housing and neighborhood revitalization since 1976, when we began to utilize CDBG monies for housing rehabilitation grants and loans to low income persons. We were one of the first communities in Maryland to utilize CDBG funds for this purpose. This ongoing project has resulted in the rehabilitation of hundreds of homes in our community. We have operated this program continuously since its inception. We are committed to making sure that all residential units, whether owner-occupied or rental units, meet minimum livability standards. As a result, our neighborhoods have become stabilized and are generally in satisfactory condition.

We have also resurfaced streets in all neighborhoods and have provided for the construction and upgrading of sidewalks in many areas. New subdivisions are required to provide sidewalks and to connect to existing transportation networks. Utilizing Community Legacy funds, we were able to remove a blighted former grocery store building from a residential area. That site has since been reconstructed as a new fire station building.

Our zoning code is being utilized effectively to protect existing neighborhoods and proper types of uses and development. We have updated our zoning code to further protect existing neighborhoods. The amended code minimizes the possibility of the conversion of existing homes to multifamily.

As part of our Sustainable Community Plan, it is our intention to continue our housing rehabilitation program and to continue to apply for new grants as previous grants have been fully utilized.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) Will these housing initiatives or projects increase access to transit or community walkability and/or decrease transportation costs? In other words, will the housing investments result in more people living near work or town centers, or able to more conveniently reach work, school, shopping and/or recreation?*(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

Worcester County is one of the most rural areas of the state. For this reason, there are limited choices in transit. Citizens must either utilize their own vehicles or take advantage of limited public bus service. Shore Transit, a division of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, is the public transit agency for the Maryland Lower Eastern Shore counties of Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester.

Our Comprehensive Plan calls for discussions with Shore Transit to increase the number of stops in Pocomoke as well as the frequency of the stops. This is also a part of our Sustainable Communities Plan.

The Somerset Commuter, another bus service, provides regular runs between Pocomoke and Salisbury with stops in Princess Anne. It is not anticipated that our housing initiatives will have any impact on the service. However, it is expected that related community walkability projects will augment our housing efforts so that any new residents will be able to easily walk around our community.

The network of sidewalks in the downtown is essentially complete. However, many other residential areas are not connected by sidewalks. We will continue an on-going effort to ensure that sidewalks are installed or repaired throughout the City as needed, including those downtown that are being disrupted by growing roots.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) What is your goal for of number of units to be created of affordable workforce housing, rental and homeownership? What populations (by income or special needs) will benefit from this increased access to affordable housing? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

In developing our housing policy, we will strongly consider the needs of the following special groups: low and moderate income families with children, students with affordability issues, those living in deteriorated housing, and the elderly. Due to Pocomoke's demographic makeup, we are dealing with a population which is in severe economic distress. It is absolutely essential that funds be obtained through a partnership of strong private investment with substantial government participation.

The City has set a goal for the creation of 5-20 new housing units per year over the next five years, for a total of 25-100 new housing units. This would accommodate approximately persons. It is expected that at least two thirds of these new units would be made available to and be suitable for low and moderate income persons and families. Over 50 units would be homeownership units and the remaining would be rental units.

The majority of the population in the town cannot afford homeownership at this time. The poverty levels in certain areas of Pocomoke have made it difficult for some families to pay rent, let alone be able to accumulate enough funds for settlement costs and a down payment on a new home.

(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City of Pocomoke will be the lead agency in housing efforts. We will rely upon various federal and state funding agencies to assist us.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

E. Support transportation efficiency and access.

(1) What policies, strategies and projects are envisioned to strengthen the transportation network that affects the proposed SC Area? How will these initiatives support transportation choices (including walking, bicycling, bus or rail transit, and carpooling) or otherwise promote an efficient transportation network that integrates housing and transportation land uses? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The city has been very active in maintaining its streets and sidewalks. In 2008, Market Street and other adjacent streets or resurfaced. In addition, handicapped access curbs have been cut at all downtown intersections. We have drawn heavily from our Comprehensive Plan in order to develop the transportation component of our Sustainable Communities plan. Relevant activities we will undertake are as follows:

- preserve the rural and scenic nature of the gateways into Pocomoke City
- discuss additional service from Shore Transit
- discuss the feasibility of a system of sidewalks, bikeways and green spaces to connect neighborhoods to each other, to the city center and to green corridors outside of the city
- study the feasibility of new connections in the existing street network to allow greater connection between neighborhoods
- to encourage the state of Maryland Department of Transportation to support the continuation and maintenance of the mainline railroad through Pocomoke due to its importance to the Industrial Park and several local area businesses that depend on rail shipments, to encourage the Norfolk and Southern Railroad as well as the Accomack and Northampton Transportation District to work together to ensure continued rail service
- to work with the railroad to provide occasional passenger train excursions
- promotion of activities on the Pocomoke River

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(2) If applicable, describe the SC Area's connection or proximity to transportation centers (e.g. Metro, MARC, and light rail stations) and describe opportunities for Transit - Oriented Development (TOD). Will Plan strategies and projects contribute to jobs/housing balance or otherwise provide a mix of land uses that can be expected to reduce reliance on single-occupancy automobiles? (If transit or TOD is not applicable in your community, all points in this section will be based on questions 1 and 3) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The City is not close to transportation centers due to its location on the Lower Eastern Shore.

IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

(3) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The transportation element of our SC Plan is a function of the City government responsibilities.

V. PROGRESS MEASURES

For the Plan parts of section IV (A through F):

(1) List the specific outcomes that the Plan seeks to produce. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The following are specific outcomes we expect to see as a result of the implementation of our Sustainable Communities Plan:

- substantial increase in the number of visitors per year
- provision of new jobs
- attraction of new businesses to serve the visitors and residents
- increase in the city's assessable base of the core community
- increase in the city's median income
- improvement of the retention of businesses in the downtown area
- improve the appearance of the downtown district with new lighting, landscaping, sidewalk improvement, and both public and private investment in existing vacant property
- significant use of the new community center
- addition of new downtown residents through zoning changes and new construction
- increase in the number of visitor to our four nonprofit attractions
- continuation of support for the Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Department

(2) And, list the specific benchmarks that will be used to measure progress toward these outcomes. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The following are the benchmarks we are aiming for, in regard to those outcomes which can be measured. It should be noted that the downtown restaurant, to be housed in an addition to the Delmarva Discovery Center, is set to open on Memorial Day weekend and is expected to be an asset to the downtown.

- substantial increase in the number of visitors per year- 10,000 additional visitors (this was the estimate in a marketing study prepared for the Delmarva Discovery Center by Economic Research Associates of Washington, DC)
- provision of new jobs- at least 50
- attraction of new businesses to serve the visitors and residents- at least 5 new businesses
- increase in the city's assessable base of the core community- an increase of at least 5-10%
- increase in the city's median income- an increase of at least 5%
- significant use of the new community center- use by at least 5,000 people per year

REPLACE THIS PAGE WITH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
RESOLUTIONS

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICATION
DISCLOSURE AUTHORIZATION AND CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned authorizes the Department of Housing and Community Development (the “Department”) to make such inquiries as necessary, including, but not limited to, credit inquiries, in order to verify the accuracy of the statements made by the applicant and to determine the creditworthiness of the applicant.

In accordance with Executive Order 01.01.1983.18, the Department advises you that certain personal information is necessary to determine your eligibility for financial assistance. Availability of this information for public inspection is governed by Maryland’s Access to Public Records Act, State Government Article, Section 10-611 et seq. of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the “Act”). This information will be disclosed to appropriate staff of the Department or to public officials for purposes directly connected with administration of this financial assistance program for which its use is intended. Such information may be shared with State, federal or local government agencies, which have a financial role in the project. You have the right to inspect, amend, or correct personal records in accordance with the Act.

The Department intends to make available to the public certain information regarding projects recommended for funding in the Sustainable Community Plan. The information available to the public will include the information in this application, as may be supplemented or amended. This information may be confidential under the Act. If you consider this information confidential and do not want it made available to the public, please indicate that in writing and attach the same to this application.

You agree that not attaching an objection constitutes your consent to the information being made available to the public and a waiver of any rights you may have regarding this information under the Act.

I have read and understand the above paragraph. Applicant’s Initials: _____

Anyone who knowingly makes, or causes to be made, any false statement or report relative to this financial assistance application, for the purposes of influencing the action of the Department on such application, is subject to immediate cancellation of financial assistance and other penalties authorized by law.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the Sustainable Communities Plan or Project(s) proposed in this Application can be accomplished and further certifies that the information set herein and in any attachment in support hereof is true, correct, and complete to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.

Authorized Signature

Print Name and Title

Date